

1993

# Surface and Depth: Some Methodological Problems with Bringing Native American Centered Histories to Light

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## Recommended Citation

Jo Carrillo, *Surface and Depth: Some Methodological Problems with Bringing Native American Centered Histories to Light*, 20 N.Y.U. Rev. L. & Soc. Change 405 (1993).

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**Author:** Jo Carrillo

**Source:** New York University Review of Law & Social Change

**Citation:** 20 N.Y.U. Rev. L. & Soc. Change 405 (1993).

**Title:** *Surface and Depth: Some Methodological Problems with Bringing Native American Centered Histories to Light*

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## REVIEW ESSAY

### SURFACE AND DEPTH: SOME METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS WITH BRINGING NATIVE AMERICAN-CENTERED HISTORIES TO LIGHT

EXILED IN THE LAND OF THE FREE: DEMOCRACY, INDIAN NATIONS, AND  
THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

Edited by Oren R. Lyons and John C. Mohawk. Santa Fe: Clear Light  
Publishers, 1992. Pp. xiii, 415. \$24.95.

JO CARRILLO\*

#### INTRODUCTION

During the late 1980s, a group of scholars collaborated in an effort to explore how well historians had rendered Native American history.<sup>1</sup> The scholars split between empirical and experiential positions. Empiricists took the view that historians could use data, more or less neutrally, to draw inferences about Native American life and experience in the United States. Experientialists maintained that in order to describe or analyze Native American experience, historians had to identify and incorporate Native American ways of knowing into their narratives. While empiricists regarded experientially derived knowledge as potentially biased, unreliable, and unverifiable, experientialists treated empirically derived accounts of Native American life as inaccurate and incomplete. At its core, *Exiled in the Land of the Free*<sup>2</sup> continues this debate.

*Exiled* is a collection of eight essays, three of which are authored by Native Americans. The book's overarching premise is that American Indians inspired the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, a notion almost entirely absent in the historical literature. But, *Exiled* is only in part a book about how Native Americans influenced rather than experienced colonial political institutions. It is also, and perhaps more importantly, an attempt to innovate historical method so that Native American agency can emerge. The

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1. THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND THE PROBLEM OF HISTORY (Calvin Martin ed., 1987); see also Jo Carrillo, *Book Review*, 33 ARIZ. L. REV. 281 (1991) (reviewing THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND THE PROBLEM OF HISTORY (Calvin Martin ed., 1987)).

2. EXILED IN THE LAND OF THE FREE: DEMOCRACY, INDIAN NATIONS, AND THE U.S. CONSTITUTION (Oren R. Lyons & John C. Mohawk eds., 1992) [hereinafter EXILED].



first four of the eight essays locate the roots of democratic ideals, such as free speech and participatory democracy, in Native American traditions.<sup>3</sup> The other four essays address issues regarding the sovereignty of tribal governments within the United States.<sup>4</sup> This review essay discusses the first group of *Exiled* articles because they most clearly illustrate the methodological problems that emerge in writing Native American history.

Part I of this essay explores the claim that standard methodological practices obscure the historical contributions of Native Americans to modernity. At the center of this exploration is a discussion of whether the data and methods scholars use are themselves a hidden subtext. Part II discusses the importance of one's conceptual framework in writing Native American history, or Native American-centered histories. Specifically, this part explores the problems with historical narratives that attempt to extol the strength of Native American groups but, like vilifying accounts, fail to present a full and complex understanding of Native American experience. I take up these issues in the interest of working toward a historical narrative in which different and perhaps even contradictory accounts can coexist.

## I

### THE DIFFICULTY OF WRITING NATIVE AMERICAN-CENTERED HISTORY

#### A. *Surface and Depth*

In *The American Indian in the Past*,<sup>5</sup> Oren Lyons characterizes the difficulty with bringing Native American histories to light:

The history of humankind in North and South America can be divided into two parts: the history of the aboriginal peoples of the Western Hemisphere prior to the landfall of Western man, and the history of North and South America after the voyages of Columbus. These histories can be likened to an iceberg: four-fifths of its height and seven-eighths of its mass lie beneath the surface of the water. We can see Western occupation above the surface and visible. The aboriginal peoples' time is below the surface and invisible.<sup>6</sup>

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3. Oren R. Lyons, *The American Indian in the Past*, in *EXILED*, *supra* note 2, at 13, 16; John C. Mohawk, *Indians and Democracy: No One Ever Told Us*, in *EXILED*, *supra* note 2, at 43; Robert W. Venables, *American Indian Influences on the America of the Founding Fathers*, in *EXILED*, *supra* note 2, at 73; Donald A. Grinde, Jr., *Iroquois Political Theory and the Roots of American Democracy*, in *EXILED*, *supra* note 2, at 227.

4. Howard R. Berman, *Perspectives on American Indian Sovereignty and International Law, 1600 to 1776*, in *EXILED*, *supra* note 2, at 125; Curtis G. Berkey, *United States-Indian Relations: The Constitutional Basis*, in *EXILED*, *supra* note 2, at 189; Vine Deloria, Jr., *The Application of the Constitution to American Indians*, in *EXILED*, *supra* note 2, at 281; Laurence M. Hauptman, *Congress, Plenary Power, and the American Indian, 1870 to 1992*, in *EXILED*, *supra* note 2, at 317.

5. Lyons, *supra* note 3.

6. *Id.* at 14, 16.



The *Exiled* scholars thus set out to prove that much of Native American history lies hidden below the surface of linear time. The premise is that if the sources for a more culturally accurate history lie in a realm of knowledge that is inaccessible to those who use traditional methodological approaches, then what is now regarded as the standard historical account must be inherently flawed and incomplete. John C. Mohawk addresses this dilemma by arguing that standard practices are inherently Eurocentric ways of producing historical narratives in which Native American contributions to Euro-American historical processes are insignificant, if not invisible:

Most people are unaware that the indigenous peoples of the Americas played a role in the development of the modern world. American history was long presented as a story about a migration of European peoples to a "new continent," where, given new opportunities, they forged the foundations of the modern world.<sup>7</sup>

He continues, "Historians have collaborated in this ethnocentrism through their tendency to find only what they want to find and to ignore things that are inconsistent with the dominant ideology of humankind's evolution toward civilization."<sup>8</sup> Consequently, says Mohawk, to undo the harm that historians have caused, a "virtual revolution in scholarship" is needed to "revise and reinterpret a history that was founded on ideas that American Indians and other non-Western (and often simply non-male, non-Anglo) peoples are insignificant."<sup>9</sup>

Mohawk's call for revision and Lyons's description of the tension between the historically surfaced and the historically submerged form the theoretical foundation upon which the first four *Exiled* essays rest. These essays raise questions about methodology as well as political questions about who has (or ought to have) the authority to write and interpret Native American history. It is thus quite surprising when *Exiled* challenges the traditional, Western presentation of this history at the level of narrative fact rather than of methodological theory. That is, the essays in *Exiled* lose imaginative force when they enter into the stream of linear time to argue about details instead of exploring the aporias of writing history in non-linear and non-universalizing ways.

The standard historical account that the *Exiled* scholars challenge is partly grounded in the voluminous and rich ethnohistorical literature about the Iroquois or Haudenosaunee (as they call themselves). At the risk of some oversimplification, that standard account turns on several themes. The Iroquois were a confederacy of originally five and later six groups, or nations:<sup>10</sup>

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7. Mohawk, *supra* note 3, at 47.

8. *Id.* at 58.

9. *Id.* at 62.

10. There is a difference between the concept of Native American "nations" and Native American "tribes." The concept of nationhood, which is relied upon in *EXILED*, accurately implies that Native American groups retained pre-constitutional, or inherent, governmental



the Mohawks, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and later the Tuscarora.<sup>11</sup> The unit of power for the Iroquois was the clan.<sup>12</sup> Although the clans were independent of each other, they were loosely dispersed through an inter-village network,<sup>13</sup> which served as the basis for the Haudenosaunee nation.<sup>14</sup> The Haudenosaunee policy making body was the Confederacy Council.<sup>15</sup> In this Council, each village was represented by a male member whose position was acquired by inheritance.<sup>16</sup> Although women were not eligible for seats on the council, they wielded considerable power within the villages through their favored status in the clan.<sup>17</sup> Sometimes included in the standard account are descriptions of early agreements with Europeans, the impact of European disease on the Haudenosaunee population, and the shifting Haudenosaunee member alliances with England, France, and the United States.<sup>18</sup>

*Exiled's* most powerful challenge to this standard account comes not from arguing about details. It comes instead through shifting the perspective from a conventional viewpoint that cannot imagine tribal societies as agents of participatory democracy to a viewpoint that can. Given its innovative stance, *Exiled* will probably be dismissed both by those who are skeptical of the intellectual influence of Native Americans and by those who insist on the importance of historiographical and methodological convention. But discrediting *Exiled* would postpone an exploration of two fundamental issues that the collection brings to the fore. First, what are the Western methodological processes that categorize the contributions of Native Americans as primitive, undocumentable, unverifiable, mythical, prehistorical, and therefore outside the realm of history, by definition? Second, how can these processes be changed so that Native American-centered historical narratives can emerge?

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sovereignty. The concept of "tribe," on the other hand, fixes Native American governmental groups as secondary phenomena of more complex political structures called states. See, e.g., MORTON FRIED, *THE NOTION OF TRIBE* 99-114 (1975); Judith Resnick, *Dependent Sovereigns: Indian Tribes, States, and the Federal Courts*, 56 U. CHI. L. REV. 671, 747 (1989).

For a discussion more particular to the Iroquois, see Marshall Sahlins, *The Segmentary Lineage: An Organization of Predatory Expansion*, in *COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS: STUDIES IN THE POLITICS OF PRE-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES* 89 (Ronald Cohen ed., 1967). See also Thomas Abler, *Beavers and Muskets: Iroquois Military Fortunes in the Face of European Colonization*, in *WAR IN THE TRIBAL ZONE: EXPANDING STATES AND INDIGENOUS WARFARE* 151 (R. Brian Ferguson & Neil L. Whitehead eds., 1992).

11. See generally Lyons, *supra* note 3, at 31-37; see also DUANE CHAMPAGNE, *SOCIAL ORDER AND POLITICAL CHANGE: CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENTS AMONG THE CHEROKEE, THE CHOCTAW, THE CHICKASAW, AND THE CREEK* (1992); CHRISTOPHER VECSEY, *IMAGINE OURSELVES RICHLY: MYTHIC NARRATIVES OF NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS* (1988).

12. Lyons, *supra* note 3, at 38.

13. *Id.* at 38-39.

14. *Id.* at 38.

15. *Id.* at 39.

16. Abler, *supra* note 10, at 152.

17. See generally Grinde, *supra* note 3, at 236.

18. See, e.g., Abler, *supra* note 10.



### B. *The Hidden Text of Data and Method*

In an important work, Immanuel Wallerstein inadvertently contributed to the perception of indigenous peoples as insignificant historical figures.<sup>19</sup> In fashioning a theory to describe and explain the early colonial period, Wallerstein wrote that the emerging capitalist economy of the sixteenth century crossed most, if not all, identifiable political, cultural, and racial boundaries of the early modern world.<sup>20</sup> As a way of studying this economy, Wallerstein suggested that scholars of colonial societies move away from their heavy reliance on the sort of local data that reflected an ethnographically separable world and toward a reliance on the sort of national and international data that reflected an economically linked world.<sup>21</sup> Wallerstein preferred historical evidence that supported his thesis that European interests shaped peripheral (colonial) interests and, more specifically, labor and production patterns. Hence, in Wallerstein's world-system theory, colonial data, descriptions, and explanations were subordinated to data, descriptions and explanations about the core (Western European) society. This methodological positioning resulted in historical accounts that privileged Western European societies and processes of over disparate Native American ones.

Not surprisingly, those historians who studied colonial societies challenged the idea that Wallerstein's world-system theory explained colonial realities.<sup>22</sup> For example, Steve J. Stern used data from Peruvian silver mines to test Wallerstein's conclusion that indigenous miners constituted a coerced labor force that lacked power to influence the flow of silver in the European and world markets.<sup>23</sup> Stern's method ran counter to Wallerstein's because it made room for *both* colonial (peripheral system) and Western European (core system) descriptions and explanations. Whereas Wallerstein's analysis left one with the impression of a passive, indigenous labor force whose interests were defined by an increasingly strong Western European economic system, Stern's left one with the idea that the emerging world system, though strong, was sometimes forced to adjust to the pull of what Stern characterized as an American center of gravity.<sup>24</sup>

This is not to say that the miners in Stern's account of colonial Peru were

19. IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN, *THE MODERN WORLD-SYSTEM* (1974).

20. *Id.*

21. *Id.* at 9.

22. See, e.g., Steve J. Stern, *Feudalism, Capitalism, and the World-System in the Perspective of Latin America and the Caribbean*, 93 AM. HIST. REV. 829, 848 (1988).

23. *Id.* Lyons suggests the importance of a debate like the one that occurred between Wallerstein and Stern when he notes:

Although this tradition of discovering European roots for all of the developments that created the modern world continues to be strong in the twentieth century, some modern historians are crediting the Indians of the Americas with critical contributions to world history and modernity. . . Indian gold and silver, as mentioned, formed the monetary basis for the modern world economy.

Lyons, *supra* note 3, at 30.

24. Stern, *supra* note 22.



sophisticated in, or even aware of, the workings of the global market. But it is to say that Stern's data and methodology rendered the miners agents of historical and social change to the degree that they participated with other colonial interests in regulating silver production. By connecting the amount of silver the miners produced in a day (a factor of importance in any single miner's life) to the availability of silver on the global market (a factor of importance to the broader colonial mercantile and elite interests), Stern's data brought indigenous miners into historical focus as active, though perhaps somewhat unintentional, agents of change in a difficult to describe American center of gravity. Ironically, the different perspectives and explanations that arose by opposing local and global sources of data underscored Wallerstein's observation that recounting the past is a social act infused by the politics of whether to include or exclude subordinated groups from what is regarded as the standard historical narrative.<sup>25</sup>

Stern's work illustrates the importance of using a wide range of data and a flexible conceptual framework in reconstructing indigenous agency.<sup>26</sup> It also raises the thorny question of the reliability of various evidentiary sources. Reliability is a particularly salient issue in documenting the experience of groups that historians have treated as insignificant. From a methodologically conventional point of view, for example, documentary evidence is presumptively reliable data. However, from a critical point of view, it is presumptively unreliable to the degree that it is the byproduct of a colonial system of indigenous group control.

It follows that if one wants to write a *fuller* cultural history than those that *Exiled* offers for revision, one ought to use as much information as possible, including "hidden transcripts,"<sup>27</sup> which are data left out of the colonial record as a result of both dominant group neglect and subordinate group efforts to conceal activities and opinions that might expose group members to harm.<sup>28</sup> The question of what sort of material one can, will, and must use to bring indigenous agency to light becomes critical if what one wants to grasp is the constitution of a complex social field, and that social field happens to be

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25. Wallerstein explained that "[t]he past can only be told as it truly *is*, not was. For recounting the past is a social act of the present done by men of the present and affecting the social system of the present." WALLERSTEIN, *supra* note 19, at 9.

26. See Thomas Biolsi, *Review Article: The American Indian and the Problem of Culture*, 13 AM. INDIAN Q. 261 (1989), for a discussion of the importance of methodology in writing about Native American history. See JOHN COMAROFF & JEAN COMAROFF, *ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE HISTORICAL IMAGINATION* (1992), for a discussion of how to study groups that tend not to document every facet of their lives in writing.

27. See JAMES C. SCOTT, *DOMINATION AND THE ARTS OF RESISTANCE: HIDDEN TRANSCRIPTS* xxi (1990).

28. For an exploration of the parameters of this intellectual debate, see RED MEN AND HAT-WEARERS: VIEWPOINTS IN INDIAN HISTORY (Daniel Tyler ed., 1976); THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND THE PROBLEM OF HISTORY, *supra* note 1; THE INVENTED INDIAN: CULTURAL FICTIONS & GOVERNMENT POLICIES (James A. Clifton ed., 1990); Clyde D. Dollar, *Through the Looking-Glass: History and the Modern Brule Sioux*, in WESTERN HISTORY IN THE SEVENTIES 38 (Daniel Tyler ed., 1973).



indigenous.<sup>29</sup> Depending on the various sources used, including stories, narratives, and oral histories, some will be dismissed as unverifiable, which means that their use will constitute an implicit challenge to standard methodological practice.<sup>30</sup>

This is a brief description of the methodological depths into which the authors of *Exiled* take their readers. Lyons, Mohawk, and their contributors adopt a perspective much like Stern's when they challenge a historical account that works to deny indigenous peoples any credit in the creation or conception of the democratic ideals of the United States. But while the essays implicitly stress the importance of what might be called a Native American-centered analysis, only Lyons's essay experiments with the hidden transcripts such an analysis would bring to light. Lyons's essay pushes to new limits the debate about how a Native American-centered analysis might actually work.

## II

### IN SEARCH OF A NATIVE AMERICAN CENTER

Lyons's essay is notable to the extent that his account of the probable origins of North American democracy—an account he claims to tell in a uniquely Native American way—challenges Western ways of knowing and recording history.<sup>31</sup> He opens up the standard historical narrative to question both by introducing a competing version of how American democracy developed and by ignoring accepted methodological notions of validity and reliability. Central to Lyons's challenge is a claim that there are better methods and sources with which to write American history than those historians now use. Lyons, however, compromises his challenge by his reluctance to address the specific possibilities of his claim. He does not, for example, discuss what sort of historical data or methods would allow scholars to reconstruct Native American agency more accurately or effectively. Nor does he offer insight into what makes particular types of data more or less preferable than other types as a methodological matter.

Lyons clearly tells a different version from one a conventionally trained historian might offer: it is meant as an act of storytelling; it is not authorized by citations to earlier works in the field; it takes narrative as truth rather than as information subject to verification; and it takes place outside of linear time.<sup>32</sup> Lyons begins his account with a description of the pre-contact vio-

29. COMAROFF AND COMAROFF, *supra* note 26, at 14.

30. See THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND THE PROBLEM OF HISTORY, *supra* note 1; COMAROFF & COMAROFF, *supra* note 26; THE INVENTED INDIAN, *supra* note 28; see also Edward M. Bruner, *Ethnography as Narrative*, in THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF EXPERIENCE 139 (Victor W. Turner & Edward M. Bruner eds., 1986); Peter Lowenberg, *Why Psychoanalysis Needs the Social Scientist and the Historian*, in PSYCHO/HISTORY 30 (Geoffrey Cocks & Travis L. Crosby eds., 1987).

31. Lyons, *supra* note 3, at 16.

32. *Id.* at 33-34 (Lyons explains that his account is a central story in the oral history of the Haudenosaunee). For a comparison of different versions of the Haudenosaunee oral record, see VECSEY, *supra* note 11, at 94-117.



lence and strife among the Haudenosaunee that leads Peacemaker (Deganawidah) to travel through the villages in an effort to convince the Haudenosaunee to abandon violence in favor of peace and clear thinking.<sup>33</sup> On his journey, Peacemaker first encounters a cannibal who serves as a shadowy marker of the level of despair in Haudenosaunee culture at that time.<sup>34</sup> He then meets with Jakohnsaseh, the Mother of Nations, a woman whose influence and value reflect the best of Haudenosaunee potential.<sup>35</sup> The journey results ultimately in the formation of the original five-nation Iroquois Confederacy,<sup>36</sup> an alliance based on a remarkably modern sounding set of principles.<sup>37</sup>

From its creation, the Confederacy operated according to an international Gayaneshakgowa, or Great Law of Peace, under which the Haudenosaunee communities could maintain their own individual characters while simultaneously forging a national identity.<sup>38</sup> Lyons and Donald Grinde each imply that the Great Law of Peace was a highly sophisticated dispute-resolving institution.<sup>39</sup> Under this institution, local chiefs and communities pursued their own interests in accordance with local customs and rules, since the Great Law of Peace gave no coercive power to the Confederacy and did not supersede clan and village authority.<sup>40</sup> The Haudenosaunee thus moved from despair to peace, primarily because of the strength of a flexible, non-repressive system of representative government that allowed village groups to form inter-village alliances and still preserve local power.<sup>41</sup> An acknowledgement that these tribal ways of being existed and influenced European settlers is precisely what the *Exiled* contributors find lacking in most Western accounts of the formation of American political and democratic ideals.<sup>42</sup>

Since Lyons's recitation is, in essence, more mythical than historical,<sup>43</sup> historians concerned primarily with veracity might legitimately ask whether Lyons's memory is fallible, selective, or partial to Haudenosaunee contribu-

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33. Lyons, *supra* note 3, at 34.

34. *Id.*

35. *Id.* at 34, 36.

36. *Id.* at 37. The Confederacy was founded prior to the landfall of the Europeans. *Id.* at 34.

37. See *id.* at 37-39; Grinde, *supra* note 3, at 237 (referring to "the three counterbalancing principles of life": (1) a stable mind and healthy body; (2) equity and justice; and (3) physical strength and civil authority to reinforce the power of the clan system).

38. Lyons, *supra* note 3, at 39.

39. *Id.* at 38-39; Grinde, *supra* note 3, at 232-35.

40. Lyons, *supra* note 3, at 39.

41. *Id.*

42. John C. Mohawk & Oren R. Lyons, *Introduction to EXILED*, *supra* note 2, at 1, 1.

43. See Dollar, *supra* note 28, for an argument that history from a Native American point of view is more a process of storytelling and mythmaking than a pursuit of facts upon which to structure verifiable narratives. In contrast, Vine Deloria, Jr. has observed that "many Indians depend on history books for their own knowledge of Indian history as it relates to other events in America's past and a number of dreadful mistakes have already been made by Indians who knew little or nothing about the past." Vine Deloria, Jr., *The Twentieth Century, in RED MEN AND HAT-WEARERS*, *supra* note 28, at 155, 157.



tions.<sup>44</sup> However since Lyons himself treats the story more as artifact than modifiable description, such questions lose their legitimacy. Factual verification is inconsequential in this context, because Lyons's status as Chief of the Onondaga Nation authorizes him to tell the story and because the story is, by its very nature, not intended as one person's narrative analysis subject to criticism and change.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the story's timeless quality protects it from charges of factitiousness, thereby allowing it to transcend concerns about truth, authenticity, verifiability, and reliability, all of which are crucial to Western historical method.

In other words, Lyons's account is not intended as a narrative of Haudenosaunee experience in linear time. Rather, it is intended as a story told in mythical time. Yet, even keeping Lyons's intention in mind, one can accept his account and still wonder who the elder storytellers were, or are, as historically situated actors whose narratives reveal information about lived experience. Since Lyons's text and method repress this sort of inquiry, however, his account lacks the explanatory power that Stern gained when he devised a method for bringing indigenous historical agency to light. To the extent that the authors are reluctant to discuss the gaps and contradictions inherent in their own suggestions for innovation, their efforts to lift standard historical method out of its univocal, rationalistic rut falls short.

Those who are most used to imagining history as a reconstruction of human activity through archives, documents, and other written traces will, no doubt, be skeptical of the project that Lyons undertakes. Even those who are prone to reimagine history in its more poetic function will be curious, if not skeptical, about details of Lyons's method. If historians are to explore and present other ways of knowing and understanding in the interest of broader and more inclusive (polyvocal) histories, however, then Lyons and others should continue to offer as many narratives as possible. But before this methodological revolution will serve as the foundation for social and legal understanding, the proponents of these narratives can expect that their stories will be evaluated, in part, on how accurately they describe the material realities that indigenous groups experience within modern, independent states.

That Lyons does not anticipate these concerns opens him up to the censure of scholars like anthropologist James A. Clifton, who is a critic of projects like *Exiled*. In his work, Clifton sets out to discredit what he regards

44. Mohawk and Lyons acknowledge this issue in their introduction, but only in relation to Euro-American experiences. "Peoples very often develop selective memories about the origin of the elements of their culture, preferring to believe that their ancestors invented rather than borrowed the things of which they are proud." Mohawk & Lyons, *supra* note 42, at 9.

45. In the context of narrative, or storytelling, a listener's predisposition to accept information as truth turns heavily on whether the teller is authorized to relate the particular story. See, e.g., Janet E. Halley, *Truth/Value*, 4 YALE J. L. & FEMINISM 191 (1991) (reviewing PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS, *THE ALCHEMY OF RACE AND RIGHTS* (1991)). This dynamic also exists in the context of scholarly discourse, particularly if the discussion focuses on methodology. See, e.g., CLIFFORD GEERTZ, *WORKS AND LIVES: THE ANTHROPOLOGIST AS AUTHOR* (1988).



as an apologetic, pro-Native American orthodoxy.<sup>46</sup> He argues that frameworks that exalt Native Americans typically lack "clear thinking, reason, solid evidence, [and] relevant theoretical ideas."<sup>47</sup> The essence of his warning is that these corrective frameworks surface positive myths, not submerged information, and that authors promote these frameworks for political gain, not scholarly understanding.<sup>48</sup> Exalting frameworks are problematic because they tend to dismiss data that cut against positive stereotypes of Native Americans, thereby fixing a conception of Native Americans as the antithesis of all that is wrong in contemporary U.S. society.<sup>49</sup> Clifton observes that exalting frameworks perpetuate a view of Native Americans as victims, thereby leading to the interpretation of evidentiary sources in line with two metaphorically opposing themes: "The Good Things the Indian Has Given the Whiteman" and "The Bad Things the Whiteman Has Done to the Indians."<sup>50</sup>

Such complaints are strikingly similar to concerns of Arnold Krupat, who is a consistent supporter of projects like *Exiled*.<sup>51</sup> Krupat argues that if all information about Native Americans and Euro-Americans is mapped out according to metaphorically oppositional themes, the resulting historical accounts will focus on the extremes rather than on the experiential space in between.<sup>52</sup> This narrow focus will result in descriptions of Native American action as invariably motivated by a conscious need to defend against Euro-American encroachment and Euro-American action as invariably motivated by clear malice toward Native Americans.<sup>53</sup> The danger with this distortion is that it imagines Native American societies not in terms of their own agency but in reaction to Euro-American agency.

While Krupat and Clifton no doubt disagree about many things, they do agree that simplifying and polarizing Native American history undercuts Native American efforts to gain cultural and political security within the United States.<sup>54</sup> It is important to remember that Native Americans have been brutally hurt, killed, and dispossessed. However, it is also important to remember that in the wake of this past lurks a potentially destructive present against which Native Americans must continue to work tirelessly in order to retain something of the way in which they have traditionally lived and protected their reserves of human knowledge.<sup>55</sup>

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46. See James A. Clifton, *Introduction: Memoir, Exegesis, in THE INVENTED INDIAN*, *supra* note 28, at 1 [hereinafter Clifton, *Introduction*]; James A. Clifton, *The Indian Story: A Cultural Fiction, in THE INVENTED INDIAN*, *supra* note 28, at 29 [hereinafter Clifton, *The Indian Story*].

47. Clifton, *Introduction*, *supra* note 46, at 23.

48. Clifton, *The Indian Story*, *supra* note 46, at 39-44.

49. *Id.* at 32-38.

50. Clifton, *Introduction*, *supra* note 46, at 25.

51. ARNOLD KRUPAT, *For Multiculturalism, in ETHNOCENTRISM: ETHNOGRAPHY, HISTORY, LITERATURE* 232, 232-48 (1992).

52. See ARNOLD KRUPAT, *Ethnocriticism, in id.* at 13, 13-29.

53. *Id.* at 20-21; Clifton, *The Indian Story*, *supra* note 46, at 40.

54. See KRUPAT, *supra* note 52, at 21; Clifton, *The Indian Story*, *supra* note 46, at 39-44.

55. For a timely discussion of the importance of cultural diversity as a way of protecting



The authors of *Exiled* are ultimately unable to work out the beginnings of an indigenous historical method partly because their essays rely too heavily on the sort of oppositional framework that Krupat and Clifton disparage. Moreover, with the exception of Lyons, the *Exiled* authors ground their analyses primarily on the re-reading of secondary sources, making it apparent that they do not see the crucial need for surfacing what is so clearly needed: primary evidence about tribal life and institutions. Although these essays make critically important points about how and why indigenous ways of knowing and recording the past fall outside the realm of Western notions of history, they do not address how scholars can reconstruct Native American agency more accurately or effectively. To the degree that *Exiled* avoids addressing this singularly important issue, it promotes "a remarkably apolitical view of history,"<sup>56</sup> one that renders tribal societies constants in an otherwise changing world.

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biodiversity, see June Starr and Kenneth C. Hardy, *Not by Seeds Alone: The Biodiversity Treaty and the Role for Native Agriculture*, 12 STAN. ENVTL. L.J. 85 (1993).

56. Biolsi, *supra* note 26, at 265.

